

5. How does public school in the OASIS compare to your experience in school? Has author Ernest Cline created a solution to classroom overcrowding, student apathy, and school violence?

6. In his Columbus bunker, Wade puts on so many pounds that he can no longer fit comfortably in his haptic chair. How would you fare in his weight-loss program, described in chapter nineteen, featuring a simulation gym, coaching from Max, and a lockout system that restricts his diet and forces him to exercise?

7. Wade's OASIS pass phrase is revealed on page 199, at the end of chapter nineteen: "No one in the world ever gets what they want and that is beautiful." What does this philosophy mean to him at that point in his life?

8. How is the novel shaped by the 1980s backdrop, featuring John Hughes films, suburban shows like Family Ties, a techno-beat soundtrack, and of course, a slew of early video games? Did Halliday grow up in a utopia?

9. Discuss Bryce Lynch's financial situation, rigged so that Wade could infiltrate IOI. When does Wade become willing to "die trying"? How did you react to the image of debtors being forced into indentured servitude?

10. Wade doesn't depend on religion to make moral decisions or overcome life-threatening challenges. What does the novel say about humanity's relationship to religion? What sort of god is Halliday, creator of the OASIS universe?

11. Despite their introverted nature, the book's characters thrive on friendship. Discuss the level of trust enjoyed by Halliday and Og, and among Wade, Aech, Art3mis, Daito, and Shoto. How is true power achieved in Ready Player One?

12. In the closing scenes, Halliday's reward proves to be greater than mere wealth. What is Halliday's ultimate prize? How did the rules of Halliday's game help him determine the type of player who would likely win?

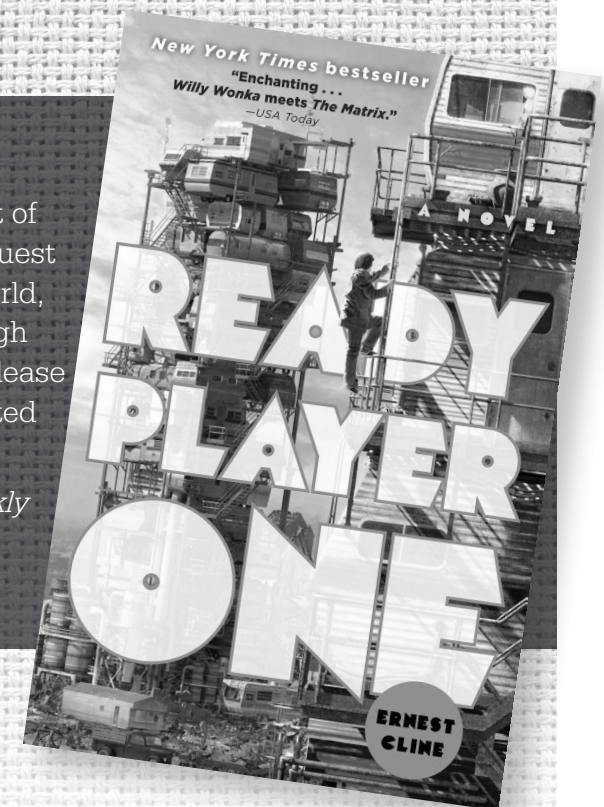
13. In his quest for the three keys, Wade is required to inhabit many imaginary worlds, including movies, video games, and a simulation of Halliday's childhood home. Which of these virtual realities appealed to you the most? What sort of virtual reality is provided by a novel?

Discussion Questions

"This adrenaline shot of uncut geekdom, a quest through a virtual world, is loaded with enough 1980s nostalgia to please even the most devoted John Hughes fans."

— *Publisher's Weekly*

Book Club in a Bag



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ERNEST CLINE has worked as a short-order cook, fish gutter, plasma donor, elitist video store clerk, and tech support drone. His primary occupation, however, has always been geeking out, and he eventually threw aside those other promising career paths to express his love of pop culture fulltime as a spoken word artist and screenwriter. His 2009 film *Fanboys*, much to his surprise, became a cult phenomenon. These days Ernie lives in Austin, Texas with his wife, their daughter, and a large collection of classic video games. *READY PLAYER ONE* is his first novel.

Book Summary

Book summary

At once wildly original and stuffed with irresistible nostalgia, *READY PLAYER ONE* is a spectacularly genre-busting, ambitious, and charming debut—part quest novel, part love story, and part virtual space opera set in a universe where spell-slinging mages battle giant Japanese robots, entire planets are inspired by *Blade Runner*, and flying DeLoreans achieve light speed.

It's the year 2044, and the real world is an ugly place.

Like most of humanity, Wade Watts escapes his grim surroundings by spending his waking hours jacked into the OASIS, a sprawling virtual utopia that lets you be anything you want to be, a place where you can live and play and fall in love on any of ten thousand planets.

And like most of humanity, Wade dreams of being the one to discover the ultimate lottery ticket that lies concealed within this virtual world. For somewhere inside this giant networked playground, OASIS creator James Halliday has hidden a series of fiendish puzzles that will yield massive fortune—and remarkable power—to whoever can unlock them.

For years, millions have struggled fruitlessly to attain this prize, knowing only that Halliday's riddles are based in the pop culture he loved—that

of the late twentieth century. And for years, millions have found in this quest another means of escape, retreating into happy, obsessive study of Halliday's icons. Like many of his contemporaries, Wade is as comfortable debating the finer points of John Hughes's oeuvre, playing Pac-Man, or reciting Devo lyrics as he is scrounging power to run his OASIS rig.

And then Wade stumbles upon the first puzzle.

Suddenly the whole world is watching, and thousands of competitors join the hunt—among them certain powerful players who are willing to commit very real murder to beat Wade to this prize. Now the only way for Wade to survive and preserve everything he knows is to win. But to do so, he may have to leave behind his oh-so-perfect virtual existence and face up to life—and love—in the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

A world at stake.

A quest for the ultimate prize.

Are you ready?

Discussion Questions

1. The OASIS becomes a part of daily life for users around the globe. What virtual realms (Google, Facebook, iCloud) do you depend on? What is at stake in the war against IOI, the internet service provider that wants to overturn Halliday's affordable, open-source approach? Is it dangerous to mix profit and dependence on technology?

2. Explore the question of identity raised in the novel. What do the characters' avatars tell us about their desires and their insecurities? In reality, does our physical appearance give false clues about who we really are? How does Parzival, transformed into a celebrity gunter, become Wade's true self?

3. With a narrator who vividly captures the human experience, *Ready Player One* delivers a world that is easy for us to imagine. In the novel, what was at the root of the grim downturn for Earth's inhabitants? Could your community start looking like the stacks by the year 2044?

4. How does love affect Wade's rational mind? Would you have given Art3mis the tip about playing on the left side to defeat the lich (page 99, chapter ten)? Did you predict that she would turn out to be a friend or a foe?
